

5 SYSTEM PERFORMANCE FOR USE AS FEEDBACK CONTROL OF
POWER SUPPLY OUTPUT OF DIGITAL RECEIVER
WHEN RECIVER IS OPERATED IN A STANDBY MODE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

10 This application claims priority of U.S. Provisional
Application Serial No. 60/233,189 filed September 15, 2000.

BACKGROUND

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to a power supply.

15 Description of the Prior Art

It is well known in the art to save the amount of energy
consumed by electrically-powered apparatus by switching the
apparatus from its active mode to its standby mode when it is
not being actively used by an operator thereof. For example, to
20 save energy, a personal computer (PC), permanently connected
on-line to a service provider for collecting information, is
often equipped with a programmable power management feature
wherein the PC monitor, in a standby mode, is deenergized
automatically after the PC operator has stopped using the PC
25 for a certain period of time, but immediately resumes its
active mode in response to the operator operating a key or the
"mouse" of the PC computer.

Further, known in the art are microwave distribution
systems comprising a group of satellite transponders for
30 transmitting a set of digital television-channel signals to
each of a large number of highly directive dish-like antennas
of individual direct-broadcast-satellite (DBS) receivers, in
which the television-channel signals are transmitted on
circularly-polarized radio frequency (RF) carrier signals in
35 the Ku-band microwave frequency range (e.g., 12,200 to 12,700
MHz). A first sub-set of the digital television signals
received by each DBS receiver are right-hand circularly
polarized (RHCP) and a second sub-set of the digital television
signals received by each DBS receiver are left-hand circularly
40 polarized (LHCP). A low noise block (LNB) converter down-

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5 receiver. The present invention is directed to meeting these needs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 The invention is directed to an improvement in a digital receiver system, such as a DBS digital receiver, in which the system comprises (1) a power supply for energizing the receiver system with a value of energization, (2) first means for operating the receiver system either in an active mode or, alternatively, in a standby mode and (3) second means responsive to a signal received by the receiver system for
15 deriving a measurable system-performance value that is a function of the value of energization. The improvement comprises third means coupled to the power supply and responsive to the measurable system-performance value when the receiver system is being operated in its standby mode for
20 reducing the value of energization to that certain value at which the measurable system-performance value is no greater than a given threshold value, where the given threshold value provides an acceptable system-performance value which is significantly below a maximum system-performance value.

25 A power supply, embodying an inventive feature includes a data signal processing circuit energized by an output supply for producing a data signal. The data signal has a bit-error that is determined by the output supply. A bit error detector is responsive to the data signal for
30 generating a signal indicative of a magnitude of the bit-error in the data signal. A power supply regulator is coupled to a source of an input supply for generating the output supply in a feedback manner, in response to the bit-error magnitude indicative signal.

35 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIGURE 1 is a block diagram of a DBS receiver;

FIGURE 2 is a block diagram of (1) the structural combination of the indoor standby components of the IRD-chassis block shown in FIGURE 1 which are relevant to the

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5 present invention, (2) the outdoor components block shown in FIGURE 1 and (3) and the coupling between them; and

FIGURE 3, together with FIGURES 3a, 3b and 3c, are block diagrams of those logical-flow steps performed manually by the user and those logical-flow steps performed automatically under the control of the microprocessor and memory shown in FIGURE 2.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to FIGURE 1, there is shown indoor-located IRD chassis 100, comprising standby components block 102, user-controlled active-enabling switch block 104 and active components block 106. As long as AC plug 108 is plugged into a source of AC power, standby components block 102 will be energized. However, active components block 106 will be energized only when the user-controlled active-enabling switch of block 104 is in its closed switch position. Also shown in FIGURE 1 is outdoor-located components 110 comprising reflector antenna, receiving horn and LNB converter block 112. As indicated by two-headed arrow 114 coupling blocks 102 and 112 together, an energized standby components 102 supplies energization to the LNB converter of block 112, while the down-converted RF output from the LNB converter of block 112 is applied as an input to standby components 102.

Referring now to FIGURE 2, there is shown the structure of coupled blocks 102 and 112 in more detail. Specifically, block 102 in FIGURE 2 shows indoor standby components 102 as comprising IRD chassis power supply 200 (which is energized so long as AC plug 108 is plugged into a source of AC voltage), LNB regulator 202, tuner 204, so-called "link" integrated circuit (IC) 206 and microprocessor and memory 208, which are combined to function with one another in accordance with the principles of the present invention. The structure of standby components 102, in practice, also includes additional blocks that perform functions which are not relevant to the present invention and, therefore, have been left unshown in FIGURE 2.

5 Further, while the indoor standby components of prior-art DBS
receivers may comprise components generally similar to
components 200, 202, 204, 206 and 208 of FIGURE 2, these indoor
standby components of prior-art DBS receivers are not combined
to function with one another in accordance with the principles
10 of the present invention.

In the case of prior-art DBS receivers, the IRD chassis
power supply thereof supplies a relatively high first fixed-
magnitude DC voltage (e.g., 22 DCV) output as an input to the
LNB regulator thereof. To select digital signals in the RHCP
15 first subset, the LNB regulator derives a relatively-low second
fixed-magnitude DC voltage (e.g., 13 DCV) output from the first
fixed-magnitude voltage applied as an input thereto. To select
digital signals in the LHCP second subset, the LNB regulator
derives a third relatively-high fixed-magnitude DC voltage
20 (e.g., 18 DCV) output from the first fixed-magnitude voltage
applied as an input thereto. The selected fixed-magnitude DC
voltage output from the LNB regulator is forwarded through the
tuner to the power input of the outdoor-located LNB converter
to both energize the LNB converter and select either the RHCP
25 first subset or, alternatively, the LHCP second subset. The
particular value of the relatively-low second fixed-magnitude
DC voltage (e.g., 13 DCV) is chosen to substantially maximize
the sensitivity response of the LNB converter to digital
signals in the RHCP first subset and the particular value of
30 the relatively-high third fixed-magnitude DC voltage (e.g., 18
DCV) is chosen to substantially maximize the sensitivity
response of the LNB converter to digital signals in the LHCP
second subset.

In the case of the DBS receiver of the present
35 invention, IRD chassis power supply 200 supplies a DC voltage
having a first programmable magnitude as a first input to LNB
regulator 202 over conductor 210. LNB regulator 202, in turn,
derives a DC voltage first output having a second programmable
magnitude which selectively corresponds to a digital signal in

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5 the RHCP first subset or, alternatively, a digital signal in the LHCP second subset, which is forwarded through tuner 204 to the power input of the outdoor-located LNB converter of block 112.

10 In response thereto, the outdoor-located LNB converter of block 112 derives a down-converted RF carrier output which is returned to indoor standby components 102 and applied as a signal input to tuner 204. Tuner 204 derives an in-phase (I)/quadrature-phase (Q) bit stream output therefrom that is applied as an input to "link" IC 206. "Link" IC 206 derives a
15 plurality of outputs including an I/Q bit-streaming error-correction output, a decryption output and an MPEG-encoding output, which are not shown in FIGURE 2, and a bit-error rate status output which, as shown in FIGURE 2, is applied as an input to microprocessor and memory 208 over conductor 212. The
20 memory of component 208 includes both non-volatile memory (e.g., flash memory), which retains stored data even when AC plug 108 is unplugged, and volatile memory, in which stored data is erased when AC plug 108 is unplugged. Among the data stored in the non-volatile memory is (1) the nominal LNB regulator voltage value and the nominal RHCP voltage value
25 which, when employed, result in substantially maximizing the response sensitivity of the LNB converter, (2) a first threshold value T_1 which is equal to the very high value of the bit-error rate which occurs whenever the magnitude of the DC voltage energizing the LNB converter is above its first range
30 of magnitudes but below its second range of magnitudes, thereby being indicative of a transition occurring between the RHCP and LHCP carrier signals, and (3) a second threshold value T_2 which is equal to an acceptable value for the bit-error rate (e.g., 1
35 bit error per 1,000,000 bits), which acceptable value is still high compared to the minimum value for the bit-error rate that occurs when the magnitude of the DC voltage energizing the LNB converter in each of the first and second range has a value that substantially maximizes the response sensitivity of the

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5 LNB converter to a digital signal in the RHCP first subset or, alternatively, a digital signal in the LHCP second subset.

Applied as an input to IRD chassis power supply 200 is a first data output from microprocessor and memory 208 for controlling the first programmable magnitude of the DC voltage supplied from power supply 200 as the first input to LNB regulator 202 over conductor 210. Applied as a second input to LNB regulator 202 over conductor 214 is a second data output from microprocessor and memory 208 for controlling the second programmable magnitude of the DC voltage supplied as the first output from LNB regulator 202 which is forwarded through tuner 204 to the power input of the outdoor-located LNB converter of block 112. LNB regulator 202 also derives an open/short flag as a second output therefrom which is applied over conductor 216 as a second input to microprocessor and memory 208 to indicate either a short or an open circuit occurring outside IRD 100 which may be used for system failure diagnostics.

The operation of the FIGURE 2 structure in implementing the principles of the present invention are indicated by the logical-flow steps shown in FIGURES 3, 3a, 3b and 3c, where the designation "N" is used to indicate that the answer to the asked question (?) is No and the designation "Y" is used to indicate that the answer to the asked question is Yes.

As shown in FIGURE 3, the first step, indicated by block 300, is for the user to determine that AC plug 108 has been plugged into an AC power source. If AC plug 108 is plugged in and block 304 indicates that active components 106 are not enabled because switch 104 is in its open switch position, the IRD is in its standby mode as indicated by block 302. In that case, microprocessor and memory 208 should be receiving a bit-error rate status input over conductor 212 that is indicative of the fact that the LNB converter is energized by a nominal LNB voltage and is deriving an RF signal output therefrom. However, if block 304 indicates that active components 106 are enabled because switch 104 is in its closed switch position,

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Referring now to FIGURE 3a, block 318 indicates that microprocessor and memory 208 initially controls the value of the second programmable magnitude of the DC voltage supplied as the first output from LNB regulator 202 to be equal to the value of the stored nominal RHCP, which causes the bit-error rate status input to microprocessor and memory 208 over conductor 212 to have a minimum value. Blocks 320 and 322 indicate that microprocessor and memory 208 continuously compares the current bit-error rate value to the very high threshold value T_1 and in response to this comparison controls both the IRD chassis power supply 200 and LNB regulator 202 to continuously step up the magnitudes of the programmable voltage outputs therefrom, thereby causing the bit-error rate value to continuously increase, until the bit-error rate value is increased to the point where it becomes equal to the very high threshold value T_1 . This occurs when the LNB converter is operating at the transition point between RHCP carrier signals and LHCP carrier signals.

As indicated by block 324, the step up of the magnitudes of the programmable voltage outputs from both the IRD chassis

5 power supply 200 and LNB regulator 202, continues even after the transition point between RHCP carrier signals and LHCP carrier signals has been reached. However, now the carrier signals derived by the LNB converts are the LHCP carrier signals and, therefore, the bit-error rate value continuously
10 decreases as the magnitudes of the programmable voltage outputs from both the IRD chassis power supply 200 and LNB regulator 202 continue to increase. As indicated by block 326, this continuous increase persists until the comparison of the current bit-error rate value with the relatively high, but
15 acceptable, threshold value T_2 shows that the threshold value T_2 has been reached. As indicated by block 328, the respective values of the magnitudes of the left-hand (LH) programmable voltage outputs from both the IRD chassis power supply 200 and LNB regulator 202 that result in the current bit-error rate
20 value becoming equal to the relatively high, but acceptable, threshold value T_2 are stored in the volatile memory of microprocessor and memory 208. It is apparent that these stored voltage magnitude values are smaller than the voltage magnitude values (e.g., 18 VDC) which would result in a maximum
25 sensitivity response and a minimum bit-error rate value in the LHCP carrier signals derived by the LNB converter.

Referring now to FIGURE 3b, block 330 indicates that microprocessor and memory 208 initially controls the value of the second programmable magnitude of the DC voltage supplied as
30 the first output from LNB regulator 202 to be equal to the value of the stored nominal RHCP, which causes the bit-error rate status input to microprocessor and memory 208 over conductor 212 to have a minimum value. Blocks 332 and 334 indicate that microprocessor and memory 208 continuously
35 compares the current bit-error rate value to the relatively high, but acceptable, threshold value T_2 and in response to this comparison controls both the IRD chassis power supply 200 and LNB regulator 202 to continuously step down the magnitudes of the programmable voltage outputs therefrom, thereby causing

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the bit-error rate value to continuously increase, until the bit-error rate value is increased to the point where it becomes equal with the relatively high, but acceptable, threshold value T_2 . As indicated by block 336, the respective values of the magnitudes of the right-hand (RH) programmable voltage outputs from both the IRD chassis power supply 200 and LNB regulator 202 that result in the current bit-error rate value becoming equal to the relatively high, but acceptable, threshold value T_2 are stored in the volatile memory of microprocessor and memory 208. It is apparent that these stored voltage magnitude values are smaller than the voltage magnitude values (e.g., 13 VDC) which would result in a maximum sensitivity response and a minimum bit-error rate value in the RHCP carrier signals derived by the LNB converter.

The nominal value of the current supplied by IRD chassis power supply 200 to LNB regulator 202 and the LNB converter is substantially 200 milliamperes (mA). The above-described prior-art DBS receiver employs fixed-valued LH regulator and chassis voltages of 18 VDC and 22 VDC, respectively, resulting in an LNB converter power consumption of $0.2 \times 18 = 3.6$ Watts (W) and a total power-supply consumption of $0.2 \times 22 = 4.4$ W. Similarly, the above-described prior-art DBS receiver employs fixed-valued RH regulator and chassis voltages of 13 VDC and 22 VDC, respectively, resulting in and an LNB converter power consumption of $0.2 \times 13 = 2.6$ W and a total power-supply consumption of $0.2 \times 22 = 4.4$ W. However, in the case of the present invention, assuming that a voltage drop of 1 DCV occurs in LNB regulator 202, illustrative values for the stored new LH regulator and chassis minimum voltages, indicated by block 328 of FIGURE 3a, are 15.5 VDC and 16.5 VDC, respectively, resulting in an LNB converter power consumption of $0.2 \times 15.5 = 3.1$ W and a total power-supply consumption of $0.2 \times 16.5 = 3.3$ W. Similarly, illustrative values for the stored new RH regulator and chassis minimum voltages, indicated by block 336 of FIGURE 3b, are 9.0 VDC and 10.0 VDC, respectively, resulting in an LNB

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5 converter power consumption of $0.2 \times 9.0 = 1.8\text{W}$ and a total
power-supply consumption of $0.2 \times 10.0 = 2.0\text{W}$. Thus, while in
the LH case, the use of the present invention reduces the total
power-supply consumption by only the relatively small amount of
 $4.4\text{W} - 3.3\text{W} = 1.1\text{W}$, in the RH case, the use of the present
10 invention reduces the total power-supply consumption by the
relatively large amount of $4.4\text{W} - 2.0\text{W} = 2.4\text{W}$. For this reason,
only the RH case is employed while the DBS receiver is
operating in its standby mode, since this saves the most energy
because normally the IRD is operated by the user in its active
15 mode only a minority of the time and is operated by the user in
its standby mode a majority of the time.

More specifically, after the block 310 search steps for
minimum LHCP voltage, shown in above-described FIGURE 3a, and
the block 312 search steps for minimum RHCP voltage, shown in
20 above-described FIGURE 3b, have been completed and both the LH
and RH regulator and chassis voltage values have been stored in
the volatile memory of microprocessor and memory 208, the DBS
receiver becomes operational in either its active or standby
mode, depending on whether user-controlled active-enabling
25 switch 104 is in its closed switch position or its open switch
position, and remains operational until AC plug 108 is
unplugged from the AC power source. To achieve relatively low
energy consumption of the IRD when operating in its active mode
and yet still insure that the bit-error rate has an acceptable
30 value for active-mode operation, it is essential that both the
relatively-lower RH and the relatively-higher LH regulator and
chassis voltage values stored in the volatile memory of
microprocessor and memory 208 be employed. However, the lowest
energy consumption of the IRD when operating in its standby
35 mode is achievable by employing only the relatively-lower RH
regulator and chassis voltage values stored in the volatile
memory of microprocessor and memory 208 without exceeding an
acceptable bit-error rate value for standby-mode operation.

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In this regard, the operational steps of block 314, shown in FIGURE 3, comprise the logical-flow steps performed by blocks 338, 340, 342, 344, 346 and 348 of FIGURE 3c. More particularly, solely the new RH regulator and chassis voltage values stored in the volatile memory of microprocessor and memory 208 are read out and applied, respectively, as the programmable voltage values from LNB regulator 202 and on conductor 210 from IRD chassis power supply 200 (as indicated by block 338 of FIGURE 3c, which receives its input from the output of block 312 of FIGURE 3). If blocks 340 and 348 indicate that AC plug 108 has not been unplugged and block 342 indicates that the active mode has not been enabled, block 344 indicates that the IRD is being operated in its standby mode. This standby-mode operation continues until either block 340 or 348 indicates that the AC has been unplugged or block 342 indicates that the active mode has been enabled. If AC plug 108 has been unplugged, the RH regulator and chassis voltage values stored in the volatile memory of microprocessor are erased (so that replugging AC plug in requires all of the above-described flow steps of FIGURE 3 be repeated). If block 342 indicates that the active mode has been enabled, either the new RH or, alternatively, the new LH regulator and chassis voltage values (depending on the television channel selected by the user) are read out from storage in the volatile memory of microprocessor and memory 208 and applied, respectively, as the programmable voltage values from LNB regulator 202 and on conductor 210 from IRD chassis power supply 200 (as indicated by block 346 of FIGURE 3c).

While the present invention is primarily directed to a DBS receiver system, it extends to any receiver system, digital or analog, which employs (1) a power supply for energizing the receiver system with a value of energization, (2) first means for operating the receiver system either in an active mode or, alternatively, in a standby mode, (3) second means responsive to a signal received by the receiver

- 5 system for deriving a measurable system-performance value that is a function of the value of energization and (4) third means coupled to the power supply and responsive to the measurable system-performance value when the receiver system is being operated in its standby mode for reducing the value
- 10 of energization to that certain value at which the measurable system-performance value is no greater than a given threshold value, where the given threshold value provides an acceptable system-performance value which is significantly below a maximum system-performance value. Without limitation, such
- 15 digital receiver systems include those that use set-top boxes, MMDS receivers, such personal-computer (PC) associated devices as cable modems, data-service receivers, telephone modems, and GEOCAST receivers.

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